



EdiCitNet

(www.edicitnet.com)



Transition Town Letchworth (TTL) reported on the EdiCitNet project at the November 2019 meeting of the NHDC Cabinet Panel on the Environmental. At the time the Heritage Foundation was a partner organisation on this European Funded project and Transition Town Letchworth was a member of the 'City Team'. The Heritage Foundation have decided to pull out of EdiCitNet as they focus on their core deliverables following the COVID lockdown. Discussions are taking place in NHDC to determine if NHDC could offer to replace the Heritage Foundation as the project partner and receive the remaining grant funding (approx 90% of \$157,517). If NHDC are willing to become a project partner approval will need to be sought from the project coordinators and the European Commission for this change.

TTL consider that ongoing involvement in this fully funded European Project would deliver benefits to Letchworth, and the learning could be shared wider, across the District. TTL would continue to support this project if NHDC replace the Heritage Foundation as a partner on this European funded project.

The aim of EdiCitNet is to extract best practice on how to grow food in urban environments from exemplar cities and organisations across the world, and then share this learning via a tool set that can be used by any town or city to develop an Edible City Masterplan. Letchworth is funded as a 'Follower City' to visit Learning Labs being set up in Front-Runner Cities and to test the planning tools being developed with the aim of producing a Master Plan for turning Letchworth into an exemplar Edible City.

The following quote from the project description highlights the potential of the project to deliver social benefits as well as increase food grown in urban spaces.

“Over the last decade, efforts to implement traditional Nature based solutions (NBS), such as parks, vegetation along urban roads, small and medium-scale green space on and around residential buildings, have been intensified and up-scaled. However, these NBS have not been able to significantly increase social cohesion as they mostly invite to 'stay and use' but not to become actively involved on-site, in an ongoing fashion. In contrast, initiatives based on edible urban green space directly and lastingly involve citizens in social processes, ranging from co-design to co-implementation and long-term co-management of evolving edible green spaces.”

Benefits from Letchworth Remaining as an EdiCitNet Follower City

- Funding for educational visits from and to project partners, including Learning Labs in the Front-Runner Cities (see Annex A for examples of activities from which we could learn).
- Funding to attend the annual project meetings where there will be an opportunity to discuss issues and learn from all the other project partners.
- Expertise from the University of Hertfordshire (who have been involved in the project from its conception) to coordinate Letchworth's activities, working with local volunteers and NHDC (funded from the grant).
- Support from several research partners to collaboratively create a Letchworth masterplan that shows how Edible City Solutions can be used to tackle their specific societal challenges. The masterplan will take the form of a transition pathway, which consists of three major steps, a system model of the current situation, a desired future scenario based upon this model and a concrete strategy how to transfer from the current situation to the scenarios.
- Detailed manuals and training sessions which will allow local team members to organise and conduct a participatory process to create a masterplan for the urban planning of Edible City Solutions.

By taking part the Letchworth City Team is expected to deliver:

- 1) A report with detailed documentation of already existing Edible City Solutions in Letchworth.
- 2) A Masterplan for urban Edible City Solutions planning in Letchworth

TTL hope that NHDC Cabinet Panel on the Environmental will show its support for NHDC replacing the Heritage Foundation as the partner on the EdiCitNet project.

Annex A: Examples of Learning Opportunities from Front Runner Cities / NGOs and SMEs

Andernach

The city aimed to form creative public green space, to support biodiversity and to save as much money on green space maintenance. Vegetables, culinary herbs or cut flowers turned green spaces into exciting areas for the citizens. In 2014 the program to cultivate these Edible City Solutions was carried out by 6 workers and one professional gardener. Maintenance costs significantly decreased by involving more citizens, students and elderly people. Objectives for the living lab include:

- Developing close cooperation with “Perspektive gGmbH” and green space management and municipality.
- Innovating a peri-urban permaculture area through open access ECS for public use.
- To address the societal issue of better inclusion of refugees and mentally unstable children along with providing opportunities to long-term unemployment people.

Oslo

Settlement is to a large degree segregated according to socioeconomic background, with a ‘rich’ west and a ‘poor’ east of the city. Objectives for the living lab include:

- Developing market distribution networks for tackling neighbourhood high poverty and unemployment.
- Empower local citizens to launch their own start-up with support of the NSHB

“VATERLANDSPARKEN (Oslo) – Reviving derelict places. This small urban square located near the central train station of Oslo - nicknamed as the ‘most dangerous place in Oslo’ - infamous for the sale and open consumption of illegal drugs experienced a dramatic transformation overnight. In 2015, the SME Nabolagshager4 and the Department of Environment and Transport of the City of Oslo started an innovative experiment with vegetable boxes and crappers to explore Edible City Solutions for reviving this public space. Today’s crime statistics showed a complete absence of negative episodes.

Havana

Long-term food security and self-sustainment of urban food production; Inclusion from deprived part of the urban society (e.g. elderly people, low income families); Food production with limited resources

INIFAT will lead the co-design of strategies on transfer of urban organic horticulture technologies to the global ECS market on innovative measures to encourage the participation of women, elderly people and youth.

Berlin

Gentrification and rapidly growing population are provoking an ongoing fragmentation of communities and a lack of neighbourhood belonging. Objectives for the living lab include:

- Citywide business and planning strategies.
- Reducing green space maintenance cost through ECS.

CHANGEMAKER – Team building by compensation measures.

Beyond mapping public and freely available fruit trees and shrubs, the SME Mundraub5 raises curiosity, knowledge and commitment to intergenerational replanting, maintenance and use of fruit trees in urban areas. Moreover, Mundraub offers companies to carry out compensation measures by planting fruit trees to offset a company’s environmental impacts. Aligned with ideas of new corporate citizenship, teambuilding measures as alternatives to hedonistic activities or financial bonus payments are offered, where company staff participates in compensation plantings and environmental education courses.

Rotterdam

The City has more than 200 nature-based Edible City Solution initiatives mainly grass-roots, volunteer reliant and dependent on (private) funds. When granted funds, they lack time, capacity and/or expertise to monitor and to show the funders the social benefits of their organisations. Some initiatives have an ambition of picking up commercial activities. EdiCitNet will guide these fragmented and often vulnerable ECS to a stable network of ECS in the Living Lab Rotterdam. Objectives for the living lab include:

- Formation of association, cooperation and other legal bodies for ECS initiatives.
- Centralisation of responsibility at municipal scale
- Optimise processes and interaction between the municipality and associations
- Facilitating green and edible initiatives: provide initial funding, setting up network, decreasing procedures, rules and legal barriers, offering land, professionalising initiatives
- Access to knowledge about local business opportunities and financing model